

In Their Own Words...

Damtew Teferra

Director, International Network
Higher Education in Africa

25 February 2010
Oslo University College, Norway

Praise

We are terribly lucky [that] the Swedes [SIDA] do not attempt to influence much [of the partnership]. They do not try and dictate the terms [of cooperation] like the World Bank and other external agencies...

Owning the Agenda

I think it is good that we get these supports as we are still economically weak. But we have to put in place the needed negotiation skills that focus on our own agenda while, at the same time, accommodating the interests of these external agencies. The benefits must be mutual...

...the Agenda

Because, if I can express it right, there is what they call “donor driven research”. The research activities reflect by and large the interests of the donors... I do not mean, however, that they are not useful...

Sustainability

Relying on external support is not sustainable; and it is difficult to determine who will be willing to support and who [will] not. The will/vagaries of external agencies dictate the terms and does not have internal coherence and stability.

...Sustainability

As external sources also come with the advice and guidance of experts from the donor agencies/countries, the research and development [initiatives] that are based on external support will not be viable. They will also be temporary, as are the supports provided by most of the donor agencies.

Lack of Coordination

In most cases there is less coordination of [external] resources in a sense that there is an overlap of research interests and therefore, resources could be allocated in unbalanced way that some scientific problems receive much interest and enormous resources for that matter.

Ownership

The issue of ownership has arisen where undemocratic agencies [and institutions] insist that countries relinquish their claims on their resources such as genetics [biodiversity] and medicine [medicinal knowledge].

Dependence

As long as there is an immense dependence on external agencies for finance, there is always influence to direct the research interests in the direction of these aid institutions, if not denying the fact that Africa receives so much benefit from external aid.

Outright Criticism

Just pumping money is not enough! which always seem to end with the wrong persons.....
Support for the motivated young people should be more.
Financing, politically motivated, academic whales is not going to achieve much!

Source

Teferra, Damtew. *Scientific Communication in African Universities: External Assistance and National Needs*. (RoutledgeFalmer, 2003).